DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 196 153 EA 013 203

AUTHOR Roark, V. Chan
TITLE Meaningful Parental Involvement in Title-I: How Evaluation Can Help.
PUB DATE 17 Oct 80
NOTE 10p.: Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Rocky Mountain Educational Research Association (11th, Las Cruces, NM, October 17, 1980).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education: Federal Legislation: *Interest Inventories: *Needs Assessment: *Parent Participation: Parent School Relationship: *Parent Workshops: *Program Evaluation: *Surveys
IDENTIFIERS Dallas Independent School District TX: Elementary Secondary Education Act Title I

ABSTRACT

Title I mandates parental involvement in school programs. The Dallas Independent School District is evaluating the quality of parent participation programs through a Needs Assessment/Interest Survey and a goal-related workshop observation form. The survey (attached to the document) was developed by the Parental Improvement Program Manager and parent ombudsmen and provides a list of workshop topics that parents are asked to rate according to their interest. Parent ombudsmen deemed the survey useful in determining future workshop topics. The observation form is intended to give statistical data about the meetings and procedures followed, as well as an evaluation of how successfully each workshop attained its goals. The standardized list of goals and criteria for assessment should be used by the parent ombudsman in planning meaningful, organized workshops. (WD)

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Meaningful Parental Involvement In Title-I: How Evaluation Can Help

V. Chan Roark
Dallas Independent School District
Department of Research and Evaluation

Presented at: Rocky Mountain Educational Research Association
Eleventh Annual Meeting
New Mexico State University
Las Cruces, New Mexico
October 17, 1980

EA 013 203

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V. Chan Roark
Dallas Independent School District
Department of Research and Evaluation

Parental Involvement is mandated as a part of the total Title-I program, just as evaluation of that aspect and all other aspects of the program is mandated. Different views of such an evaluation must be considered. Does the evaluator study the program only in order to insure that it is in compliance with the Title-I application or does one take the extra step of assessing the meaningfulness of the program? The Dallas Independent School District is currently attempting to take the extra steps to evaluate the quality of parental involvement programs and to provide personnel concerned with the program information to be used to improve that quality. Within the DISD the goal of the parental involvement program is to improve student achievement by providing opportunities for parental education involvement and providing other services to improve student attendance. This is brought about by three major activities: the Parent Advisory Council (PAC), parent training and student referral. Two instruments, a Needs Assessment/Interest Survey and a goal-related workshop observation form have been specifically designed to assist personnel in making parental education workshops more meaningful.

The Needs Assessment/Interest Survey for 1980-81 Title-I Parent Advisory Council (PAC) Workshops was developed at the request of the Parental Involvement Program Manager to determine the needs and interests of the participants. At the initial meeting with the program manager to

discuss and plan the development of this instrument, the minutes of each PAC meeting from each campus for the previous year were read. Those topics which a Parent Ombudsman indicated were favorably received or which the Program Manager deemed interesting were recorded. From these topics and other questions which the Program Manager suggested, a rough draft of a survey was developed.

The rough draft was then submitted to a panel of five Parent Ombudsmen. At that time, it was determined that the survey would be administered in person and thus the cover letter would not be necessary. They also decided that Subdistrict workshops rather than District-wide workshops would be more appropriate. In the Individual School Workshops section, the lengthy list of topics was condensed to make it more manageable. The ombudsmen also requested that parents be able to rate the topics according to their interest-level.

The survey was further revised after discussing various means of rating the topics. Although the method for rating used on the survey is perhaps not the most efficient, it was decided that it was probably the easiest method, considering the population that would complete the survey. The survey was then translated into Spanish, as many of the parents are non-English speaking. (The survey is included in Attachment One.)

Of the 32 Title-I Parent Ombudsmen in the DISD, 25 reported that they had used the survey during the first month of school. Most of the ombudsmen felt the survey was adequate and had provided them with information that would be useful in determining future workshop topics.

A few of the ombudsmen commented that even though the system for rating topics had been simplified, it was still confusing to some parents, and therefore it will be further modified next year.

As another step in providing meaningful evaluation of the Parental Involvement program, a goal-related observation form was developed. In addition to collecting such statistical data about the meetings as date,place, number attending, and procedures used, the observer is provided with a list of goals related to various aspects of the workshop. For each goal, there is a list of criteria which must be observed in order for the goal to be considered successfully attained. The various goals are related to the topic of the workshop, the organization of the workshop content or participation at the workshop. Examples of goals and criteria are provided below.

Goal: The presentation should reflect an awareness of the special aspects of the Title-I program or of the specific needs of parents of Title-I students.

Primary Criteria:
1. The workshop covered specific aspects of the Title-I program.
2. The presenter explained and emphasized how the participants could apply what was learned in their own home settings.
3. The presenter displayed knowledge of specific Title-I Community Involvement activities, and incorporated this knowledge into the presentation of the material.

Comment: _____

Goal: The presenter should include a summary of the main points of the workshop.

Primary Criteria:
1. Presenter provided verbal summary.
2. Presenter asked participants to summarize main points verbally.
3. Presenter provided written summary of main points to participants.
4. Presenter provided summary or list of main points via an audiovisual aid such as a transparency.

Comment: _____

Goal: The presentation should allow for group or individual participation by those attending the workshop.

Primary Criteria:
1. Participants asked questions which were answered by presenter, and/or answered questions posed by presenter.
2. The presentation included activities in which participants were asked to engage on an individual basis.
3. The presentation included activities or discussions in which participants were asked to engage on a group basis.
4. Participants took part in demonstrations or practice sessions of presented skills or materials.

Comment: _____

Goal: The presentation should include follow-up services or activities designed to support or supplement the information gained in the workshop.

Primary Criteria:
1. Presenter offered self as a source of follow-up information or assistance.
2. Participants were encouraged to contact a specific agency or resource person for follow-up information or assistance.
3. Current handouts with follow-up information were provided.

Comment: _____

The Parent Ombudsmen were given this form at the beginning of the school year. It is hoped that the list of goals will be used by the Parent Ombudsman as a guide for planning meaningful, organized workshops. Also, workshop presenters will be familiar with the criteria considered necessary to successfully attain these goals.

The instrument is also beneficial to the observer because it provides a standardized list of goals to look for . agreed upon criteria to determine that the goal has been attained. Furthermore, the observer is

able to provide theombudsperson with strengths of the workshop as well as specific criteria which could be incorporated in future workshops to overcome any weak areas.

Thus in DISD two instruments are currently being used to provide evaluation which will assist Parent Ombudsman in providing meaningful parental education workshops. The first of these, the Needs Assessment/Interest Survey, provides the Parent Ombudsman with a standard instrument to assess interests of the population at a particular school so that workshops can be planned to meet these needs. Second, the observation form provides the Ombudsman with a guide for planning successful workshop by listing a variety of workshop goals and the criteria necessary to successfully attain these goals. In addition to providing a guide for planning workshops, the observation form also enables the observer to give the Ombudsman specific criteria which can improve future workshops. In this way the mandated evaluation of Title-I parental involvement has been taken beyond insuring compliance with the application to a level of offering assistance in making the parental involvement program more meaningful for the audience it serves. The process will be evaluated at the end of the year and retained or modified according to results.

Attachment One

Needs Assessment/Interest Survey
for 1980-81 PAC Workshops

Name:_____

At which Title-I school do you attend PAC meetings?_____
_____

I. Subdistrict Workshops

1. The topics listed below are suggestions for Subdistrict PAC workshops. Please check (X) all topics which you would be willing to attend a workshop about.

_____ A. Parliamentary Procedure.
_____ B. Constitution and By-laws of CPAC.
_____ C. Questions often asked about Title-I guidelines.
_____ D. How to evaluate the Title-I program.
_____ E. How to file a Title-I complaint.
_____ F. The Title-I Staff Development Program.
_____ G. How the Title-I Program is coordinated with the migrant program.

2. Please write the letter (A.B.C.D.E.F. or G.) of the program you are most interested in attending._____

3. Please write the letter (A.B.C.D.E..F. or G.) of the program of second most interest to you._____

4. Please write the letter (A.B.C.D.E.F.. or G.) of the program of third most interest to you._____

5. Please check the time you would prefer these subdistrict workshops be offered.

_____ morning
_____ afternoon
_____ evening

6. Would it better meet your needs if these workshops were held in Spanish and English?

_____ Yes
_____ No

II. Individual School Workshops

1. The topics listed below are suggestions for individual school workshops. Please check (X) all topics which you would be willing to attend a workshop about.

_____ A. Title-I Awareness
_____ B. Games and activities to help you help your child in reading and mathematics.
_____ C. Good school attendance promotes success.
_____ D. How to have better conferences with your child's teacher.
_____ E. How to prepare your child to be a better test-taker.
_____ F. Positive communication and discipline for your child.
_____ G. How to protect your child and other safety tips for the home.
_____ H. Services available from the community.
_____ I. Cultural Awareness.
_____ J. Family night activity.

2. Please write the letter (A.B.C.D.E.F. or G.) of the program you are most interested in attending._____

3. Please write the letter (A.B.C.D.E..F. or G.) of the program of second most interest to you._____

4. Please write the letter (A.B.C.D.E.F. or G.) of the program of third most interest to you._____

5. Would it better meet your needs if these workshops were held in Spanish and English?

_____ Yes
_____ No

6. Do you want these workshops held as a part of PAC meetings?

_____ Yes
_____ No

If no, please state the time that would be best for you._____

_____

_____
Parent Ombudsman

_____
Date